

County Councilman David Marks

Fifth District Newsletter

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MESSAGE FROM COUNCILMAN MARKS: **DEVELOPERS TO PAY FOR SCHOOLS, ROADS**

Baltimore County is the only suburban jurisdiction in Central Maryland that has not had the power to levy impact fees, which are payments required from developers for new schools, roads, and infrastructure. This year, the state legislature gave Baltimore County this power, and I immediately introduced legislation to put them in place. [My bill passed on May 23rd](#).



Growth is expensive, and right now, taxpayers subsidize the cost of new development. I believe impact fees are fairer. It is important to require that developers or builders help contribute to the cost of a new school or a road.

My legislation requires that impact fee revenue from new residential development goes to schools and other projects in the vicinity of the neighborhood. For example, money from a development in Perry Hall will remain in the northeast, and revenue from a Towson community will stay in central Baltimore County. The system will commence for all developments proposed after July of next year.

Impact fees are not a cure-all, but they can advance important school and infrastructure projects. I would like to thank Senator Chris West and Delegate Steve Lafferty for proposing the legislation in Annapolis that gave the county this power, and I thank the community and business leaders who worked on this bill.

ROAD RESURFACING PROJECTS ADVANCE IN THE FIFTH DISTRICT

Road resurfacing projects will be completed this spring in Towson, with improvements made to Towsontown Boulevard, Kenilworth Drive, and the part of Bosley Avenue near York Road. Plans are underway to resurface large parts of Joppa Road in northeastern Baltimore County. For updates on these and other issues, join Councilman Marks' Facebook page at www.facebook.com/countycouncilmandavidmarks.



COUNTY COUNCIL PASSES FISCAL YEAR 2020 BUDGET

On May 23rd, the Baltimore County Council passed the jurisdiction's Fiscal Year 2020 budget. Here is a summary of how the budget process unfolded.

Budget Cuts

After the County Executive submits his budget plan in April, the nonpartisan Auditor's office scours the proposal for possible cuts. **Councilman Marks voted for more than \$43 million in cuts**, which would have been largest package of cuts in recent history if adopted by the rest of the Council. Councilman Marks voted for the following cuts:

- \$14 million in cuts agreed to by the Democratic majority (Information Technology, Property Management, Public Works)
- \$8 million in additional cuts from the insurance fund
- \$3 million from affordable housing
- About \$2 million in cuts from the Baltimore County Public Schools administrative office
- \$16 million to the [BCPS laptop computer program that has been widely viewed as underperforming](#)
- \$567,200 to the BCPS Dream Box technology program
- \$71,932 to hire a county diversity coordinator (Baltimore County already has a Human Resources Director traditionally tasked with this responsibility)

Had the Council majority agreed to the cuts recommended by the Auditor's staff, the amount of the income tax increase for Fiscal Year 2020 could be nearly eliminated (the increase begins in January).

Taxes

- Councilman Marks **opposed** the income tax rate, which will be the first such adjustment since 1992.
- Councilmen Marks supported **killing** the

\$3.50-per-line charge, instead applying only the current 8 percent landline fee, and only to voice communication—a steep reduction.

- Councilman Marks **opposed** the hotel tax increase.

Spending

- The budget provides a two percent Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for Baltimore County Public School system educators, in addition to a three percent COLA received at the beginning of the 2019 calendar year.
- This spring, the state legislature had the chance to infuse the county's school construction program with at least \$400 million from gambling revenue. [The State Senate failed to pass this initiative](#). Because the state did not supply this funding, the new Rossville Boulevard elementary school and Nottingham Middle School have been delayed by at least one year. Regardless, the new budget provides the full county share for these and other school projects.
- The budget creates an Opioid Strategy Coordinator to work across agencies to address the opioid crisis.
- In response to the settlement of a lawsuit from the Fraternal Order of Police, the proposal provides \$13 million over two years in back-pay for officers and provides step increases and grade changes for officers.
- The plan adds \$500,000 to the volunteer fire company grant fund.
- About \$37 million is allocated for road resurfacing and curb and gutter maintenance, and \$2 million for traffic calming.
- The budget includes \$1 million for bicycle and pedestrian improvements and funding to develop a Towson Circulator pilot program.

You may view past financial reports for the county at: <https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/budfin/index.html>.